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Weekly Summary

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The WEEKLY SUMMARY, issued every Friday morning by the Office of Current Intelligence, reports and analyzes significant developments of the week through noon on Thursday. It frequently includes material coordinated with or prepared by the Office of Economic Research, the Office of Strategic Research, the Office of Geographic and Cartographic Research, and the Directorate of Science and Technology.

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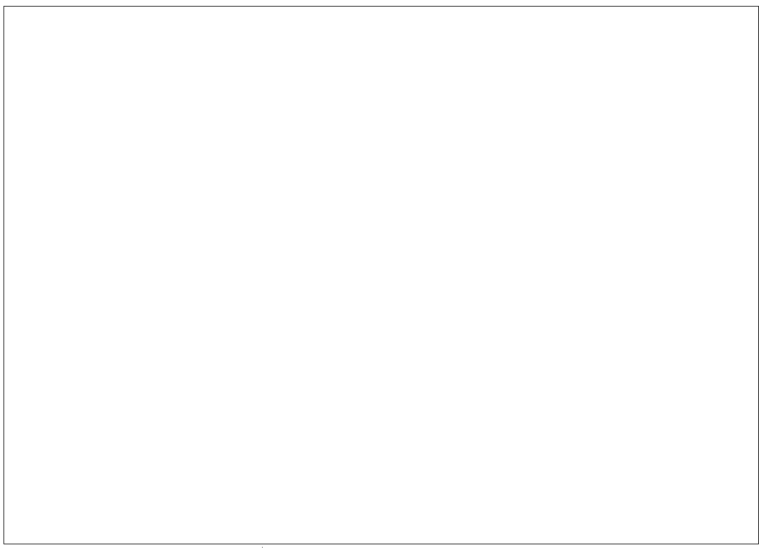
Argentina



Comments and queries on the contents of this publication are welcome. They may be directed to the editor of the Weekly Summary,

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Western Hemisphere

ARGENTINA 56-58

Excesses committed in Argentina's drive against leftist subversion have drawn strong reactions from foreign governments, possibly jeopardizing needed foreign financial assistance, and are seriously eroding the good will which Argentines have generally displayed toward the military junta that took power in March.

A number of friendly governments have been highly critical of the arbitrary arrest or disappearance of dozens of foreign nationals in the past several weeks. Some foreigners have been arrested and charged with subversive political activity; others have simply dropped out of sight.

Italy, France, and West Germany have tried in vain to secure the release of or at least obtain information about the status of more than 50 of their citizens.

Israel and the US have been more successful. Tel Aviv, after prolonged heavy pressure, secured the release of five of its nationals, who have remained in Argentina with no further apparent problems.

The US embassy lodged a formal protest over its inability to gain consular access to a US priest. A consular official was finally permitted to see him this week, and the priest has now left the country.

Domestic concern is also growing for the hundreds—perhaps thousands—of Argentines who have vanished without a trace since the coup. There is also increased pressure for the government to settle the cases of Peronist labor and political leaders arrested immediately after the take-over.

Failure to settle such cases is difficult for the junta to explain, since it has long claimed to have ironclad evidence of criminal wrongdoing against virtually all those in custody.

As rightist excesses have mounted, the government has become steadily more defensive. A recent example of its sensitivity was the brief arrest of former president Lanusse. He had criticized the government's treatment of a university professor who had served in his cabinet and now is accused of having leftist sympathies.

Neither domestic nor external pressure is expected to alter the aggressive thrust of the junta's countersubversive program. The successes against terrorists in recent weeks only tend to convince the tough-minded officers that their way is correct.

The so-called "hard-line" critics of President Videla's moderate preferences are, at least temporarily, being in effect vindicated. The President is not likely to challenge the advocates of the harsh approach at this time.

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